

## Message Text

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APPROVED BY AF/P:JALINEHAN

AF/E - MR. BARRETT

S/PRS - MR. FUNSETH

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TO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA IMMEDIATE IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS:PFOR

SUBJECT: SECRETARY'S COMMENTS RE ETHIOPIAN ARMS REQUEST  
AND RESUME OF POST STORY

1. SECRETARY KISSINGER MADE THE FOLLOWING RESPONSE TO  
A QUERY RE PRESS REPORTS THAT WASAG AT A MEETING  
FEBRUARY 26 WOULD MAKE A DECISION ON THE ETHIOPIAN ARMS  
REQUEST:

Q: MR. SECRETARY, THERE HAVE BEEN SOME REPORTS THAT THE  
REQUEST BY THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT FOR AMMUNITION WAS ON  
THE POINT OF BEING ACCEPTED BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT. CAN  
YOU COMMENT ON THAT?

A: WELL, I READ AN ARTICLE TODAY THAT SAID THAT TOMORROW  
THERE WILL BE A MEETING OF THE WASHINGTON SPECIAL ACTION  
GROUP WHICH WILL MAKE A DECISION. THE WASHINGTON SPECIAL  
ACTION GROUP DOESN'T MAKE DECISIONS. IT ANALYZES OPTIONS  
AND SUBMITS THEM TO THE PRESIDENT FOR CONSIDERATION.

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THE ISSUE THAT IS PRESENTED TO US BY THE ETHIOPIAN

REQUEST IS THAT WE HAVE HAD A MILITARY RELATIONSHIP WITH ETHIOPIA SINCE 1953. THE ERITREAN REBELLION OR INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT HAS BEEN GOING ON SINCE 1962. AND THE UNITED STATES TAKES NO POSITION ON THE MERITS OF THE PARTICULAR CONFLICT.

THE PROBLEM THAT WE HAVE TO DECIDE IS WHETHER A COUNTRY WHOSE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT HAS BEEN BASED ON AMERICAN ARMS SHOULD BE CUT OFF FROM SUPPORT AT THE PRECISE MOMENT THAT IT MOST NEEDS IT. IT IS A DIFFICULT DECISION FOR US, AND WE HAVE NOT COME CLOSE TO MAKING IT. AND TOMORROW'S MEETING IS NOT TO MAKE A DECISION. TOMORROW'S MEETING IS TO SORT OUT WHAT THE ISSUES ARE.

2. THE WASHINGTON POST REPORTED TUESDAY THAT THE U.S. EXPECTED TO APPROVE EMERGENCY ARMS FOR ETHIOPIA. THE POST QUOTED STATE AND PENTAGON SOURCES AS SAYING, "THE AMOUNT WOULD PROBABLY BE SCALED DOWN FROM THE ETHIOPIAN REQUEST OF 25 MILLION DOLLARS WORTH."

SOURCES ALSO SAID THAT "THE FORD ADMINISTRATION IS ALSO ANXIOUS TO AVOID ANYTHING THAT MIGHT BE CONSIDERED A LARGE SCALE AIRLIFT OF AMMUNITION AND ARMS TO ETHIOPIA, BUT THAT AT LEAST SOME OF THE MATERIAL WOULD BE SENT BY AIR."

"THE FINAL DECISION," ACCORDING TO INFORMED WASHINGTON SOURCES, "ON THE AMMUNITION AND MILITARY SPARE PARTS FOR ETHIOPIA WOULD BE MADE WEDNESDAY AT A MEETING OF THE WASHINGTON SPECIAL ACTION GROUP, CHAIRED BY SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY KISSINGER IN HIS CAPACITY AS CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL."

"THE REPORT OF U.S. WILLINGNESS TO COMPLY IN LARGE PART WITH THE ETHIOPIAN REQUEST COINCIDED WITH NEWS AGENCY DISPATCHES FROM ADDIS ABABA THAT WASHINGTON HAS ALREADY INDICATED THAT IT WOULD GRANT THE REQUEST. THE DISPATCHES, ATTRIBUTED TO ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT SOURCES, SAID THE U.S. HAS TOLD THE MILITARY JUNTA THAT IT WILL PROBABLY SEND THE AMMUNITION IN TWO TO THREE WEEKS..."

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